

IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-38 (canceled).

39. (previously presented) A method for use in a directory assistance system, comprising:

receiving, by a directory assistance system, a call from a caller using a communications device, the call including a current request for a suggestion of a third party provider of a product or service desired by the caller, the third party provider being independent of the directory assistance system;

retrieving, from storage, data concerning the manner in which one or more prior requests by the caller to the system were handled;

utilizing at least the retrieved data concerning the manner in which one or more prior requests were handled to select a third party product or service provider in response to the current request;

searching a database for connection information concerning the selected third party product or service provider;

facilitating a communication between the caller and the selected third party product or service provider based on the connection information;

storing, in the storage, data concerning the manner in which the current request is handled; and

after the caller communicates with the selected third party product or service provider, allowing the caller to return to the directory assistance system without terminating the call,

automatically, in response to a predetermined signal received from the caller's communications device.

40. (original) The method of claim 39, wherein the one or more prior requests were received in the same call as the current request.

41. (original) The method of claim 39, wherein the connection information including a telephone number.

42. (original) The method of claim 41, wherein the communication includes a telephone connection.

43. (original) The method of claim 39, wherein the caller is returned to the directory assistance system automatically after a disconnection by the identified product or service provider of the communication between the caller and the identified product or service provider.

44. (original) The method of claim 43, wherein the caller is returned to the directory assistance system after a predetermined period from the disconnection.

45. (original) The method of claim 39, wherein the identified product or service provider includes a restaurant.

46. (previously presented) A method for use in a directory assistance system, comprising:

receiving, from a caller by a directory assistance system, a current request for a suggestion of a third party provider of a product or service desired by the caller, the third party provider being not associated with the directory assistance system;

retrieving, from the directory assistance system, data concerning one or more prior requests by the caller to the system;

utilizing at least the retrieved data concerning one or more prior requests to select a third party product or service provider not associated with the directory assistance system in response to the current request;

assigning an agent in the directory assistance system, the agent communicating with the third party product or service provider on behalf of the caller to satisfy the current request; and

storing, in the directory assistance system, data concerning the current request in association with the caller.

47. (original) The method of claim 46, further comprising receiving information concerning the caller, and generating a ticket containing details of the desired product or service, wherein select fields of the ticket are populated with the received information.

48. (original) The method of claim 47, wherein the received information comprises the caller's telephone number.

49. (original) The method of claim 47, wherein the received information comprises the caller's home address.

50. (original) The method of claim 47, wherein the received information comprises the caller's present location.

51. (original) The method of claim 46, wherein the retrieved data comprises one or more caller preferences.

52. (original) The method of claim 51, wherein the one or more caller preferences include preferences for selected geographic regions.

53. (original) The method of claim 47, further comprising entering the name of the product or service provider at which a reservation is desired on the ticket, accessing a database to retrieve other information regarding the product or service provider, and automatically populating selected fields of the ticket with said other information.

54. (original) The method of claim 46, wherein the product or service provider includes a restaurant.

55. (previously presented) The method of claim 39, comprising: receiving a call from a caller, the call including a current request for a suggestion of a third party provider of a product or service desired by the caller, wherein the third party provider is not associated with the directory assistance system.

56. (previously presented) The method of claim 39, comprising: retrieving, from storage, data concerning the manner in which one or more prior requests made in at least one prior call by the caller were handled.

57. (previously presented) The method of claim 46, comprising:
receiving, from a caller, a current request for a suggestion of a third party provider of a product or service desired by the caller, wherein the third party provider is not associated with the directory assistance system;

58. (previously presented) The method of claim 46, comprising:
retrieving, from the directory assistance system, data concerning one or more prior requests made in at least one prior call by the caller.

59. (previously presented) A method for use in a directory assistance system, comprising:

receiving a call from a caller by a directory assistance system, the call including a current request for a suggestion of a third party provider of a product or service desired by the caller, wherein the third party provider is not associated with the directory assistance system;

retrieving, from storage, data concerning the manner in which one or more prior requests by the caller to the system were handled;

generating a record comprising the current request and the data concerning prior requests;

identifying a geographical region based on the record;

transferring the record to a call center associated with the geographical region;

identifying a third party provider of a product or service that is not associated with the directory assistance system and is located in the geographical region, based at least on the data concerning prior requests contained in the record;

searching a database for connection information concerning the identified third party product or service provider;

facilitating a communication between the caller and the identified third party product or service provider based on the connection information;

storing, in the storage, data concerning the manner in which the current request is handled; and

after the caller communicates with the identified third party product or service provider, allowing the caller to return to the directory assistance system without terminating the call.